

the SOUTHERN
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

A note from James C. Cobb, Spalding Distinguished Professor in the History of the American South, Emeritus University of Georgia

Since 1934 the Southern Historical Association has worked diligently to advance the cause of history in and of the American South, all the while earning a reputation as one of the most rigorous, yet thoroughly accessible and convivial academic organizations in the United States. The deep and enduring significance of the South as a region—its centrality to the history of critical national issues, including civil rights, public health, the environment, gender roles, politics, and the economy—has ensured that the SHA and its members have been vital participants in the national dialogue for more than eight decades. SHA programs annually feature key sessions sponsored by the Southern Association for Women Historians and reach beyond traditional geographic boundaries through affiliations with the European and Latin American and Caribbean History Sections. The organization has a history of enriching its programs by featuring influential contributors to the arts like Ralph Ellison, Robert Penn Warren, and Natasha Trethewey, and key public figures like civil rights pioneer Dr. Benjamin Mays and former President Jimmy Carter. Yet, for all its dynamism, the SHA has remained a genuine scholarly and human community—regardless of their institutional affiliation, members attending the annual meeting can expect to come away feeling professionally and personally renewed after encountering new ideas and visiting with old friends. This was precisely why, at age 88, the great historian and SHA benefactor C. Vann Woodward admitted privately that while he avoided the meetings of the other major historical organizations, “I still like to go to the ‘Southern.’”

The SHA has never made a habit of asking for donations, and we do not intend to adopt that practice now. But the reality is that we live in an era of soaring hotel costs and shrinking travel budgets, and, in the end, we must support what we value. The goal of our new capital campaign is a simple one: we seek to double the SHA’s current endowment over the next ten years and thereby ensure that the Association can remain true to itself and its membership for generations to come. This entails an ongoing commitment to affordability—a pledge never to balance our books on the backs of those least able to pay. The SHA has the lowest fees and dues in the historical profession, and continues to serve a loyal faculty clientele drawn from smaller institutions for whom attending the annual meeting may be the only opportunity each year to connect with others in their fields. Even more critically, enrolled students can currently join for \$10 and attend our conference for \$5. Although we lose financially in this arrangement, we gain inestimably more by supporting scholars at a time when they need it most. Graduate students have always been welcomed as attendees and program participants, but those seeking jobs are effectively obliged to incur the expense of attending the AHA for interviews, making it all the more imperative that do all we can to minimize the cost for them to come to our meetings.

Few enter our profession expecting to acquire financial resources commensurate with the importance of what we do, but if you are in a position where a \$1,000 contribution is feasible, please consider joining me as a Lifetime Sponsor of the Southern Historical Association. This tax-deductible donation assures you a lifetime electronic subscription to the *Journal*, badge(s) for the annual meeting, recognition in our printed programs and website, and annual invitations to Executive Council receptions. More importantly, it helps to ensure that this Association, which has served so many of us so well, will remain uniquely welcoming, vibrant, and rewarding for future generations dedicated to exploring the complex and critically important history of the American South.

To donate, simply call (706) 713-2442, email (manager@thesha.org), or go to thesha.org/donate.

Thanks for your support